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Food and Home Notes

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New Feature Coming --
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Don't use cracked or soiled eggs--they may contain bacteria that can produce food poisoning, warns USDA home economists.

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Heat coagulates and sets the protein and the egg becomes firm. If cooking temperature is too high or the egg is cooked too long, the protein shrinks and makes the white tough and the yolk mealy.

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The green discoloration that appears between the white and the yolk of a hard cooked egg results from a chemical reaction between sulfur in the white and the iron in the yolk. This discoloration is harmless.

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Does the grade of an egg affect its food value? No way. Lower grades are just as high in nutrients as top grades.

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Leftover yolks from baking? Those leftover yolks may be kept in cold water and stored in the refrigerator in a tightly closed container.

IN U.S.D.A. RESEARCH

---More and better lamb

More and better lamb for consumers will be the result of current -- and recent -- research by Agricultural Research Scientists at the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Two of the studies towards improving the reproductive capability of sheep include production of more lambs per ewe and the development of better feeding programs.

Studies in breeding and nutrition are being conducted by USDA scientists at three locations: the Agricultural Research Center, Beltsville; the Meat Animal Research Center, Clay Center, Nebraska and the Sheep Experiment Station, DuBois, Idaho.

coming soon....From E.S.

NEWS FEATURE reproducible supplement -- a one-page feature sheet from USDA's Extension will be included with an April issue of Food and Home Notes. The Spring edition of a new 4-times-a-year service to editors will be printed using a coarse line screen for reproducing. April's issue features home canning and stories on nutrition. Watch for it -- and then send us your comments.

PLANNING TO BUILD?

--Plan Positive

DO build sediment basins or traps to keep soil on the site. Stabilize, cut-and-fill slopes with temporary diversions, berms (dirt shoulders), bench terraces, or dikes to intercept and divert storm run-off.

DO -- leave vegetation as long as possible. Plant ryegrass or other temporary cover promptly after grading or filling. Prepare a good seedbed, apply lime and fertilizer, and mulch as needed.

DO -- tie down grass seed with jute, cotton or paper netting or with straw mulch sprayed lightly with asphalt. Consider hydroseeding or sodding. Ask USDA's Soil Conservation Service about erosion-control plants for steep slopes.

DO -- preserve trees and shrubs on one side to shade the stream and maintain wildlife habitat. Shape the soil on the cleared side and vegetate promptly.

DO -- notch and cut trees so that they fall away from other trees and structures. (Use ropes or guys to prevent injury and protect property).

DO -- screen borrow areas with trees. Grade, reclaim, and replant areas promptly to blend as much as possible with the adjacent landscape.

DO -- reduce runoff velocity with grade stabilization structures, grassed waterways, or energy dissipators.

DO -- make sure construction practices conform to state and local regulations.

DO -- provide temporary culverts or bridges where frequent stream crossings are necessary.

DO -- control dust by sprinkling or applying chemicals or a light bituminous coating.

DO -- consult the soil survey or check with your local conservation district office to learn about suitability of the soils for building -- drainage patterns, and about which plants will grow best in your soil.

CAN AVOIDING BOTULISM

HOME CANNING —

Botulism -- food poisoning intoxication -- is a rare disease. It results from eating food products in which a common bacterium -- *Clostridium botulinum* -- has grown for a long enough time to produce a lethal toxin, according to Ralph W. Johnston, Chief, Microbiology Staff, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Botulism is primarily a problem of home canned foods. The dangers and prevention of botulism and spoilage must be understood by the home canner. Prior to canning, there are several facts that the home canner must know about botulism:

It is a common soil organism and washing food does not remove all of the bacteria -- thus, the bacterium is present in nearly every pint of unit of food canned.

It produces an extremely heat resistant spore (seed like structure). The spore cannot be destroyed by boiling at 212F...A temperature of 240 F. is required to destroy this spore. In the home, the only way this temperature can be obtained is with a steam pressure cooker. This equipment is essential for canning corn, peas, beans, and other non-acid foods.

Acid foods, such as tomatoes, do not support the growth of *Clostridium botulinum* and may be canned in a boiling water bath -- if, all instructions are followed.

Home canned foods are not kept refrigerated so that if the food is low in acid such as corn, peas, beans, etc., any spores that live through the cooking will be able to grow and have plenty of time to produce toxin.

The home canner must seek accurate instructions and carefully follow each step. The prevention of botulism from home canned foods rests with the consumer who is home canning.

OUT IN I O W A

—Helping Homemakers

"Ship Shape" is the name of a new program in Iowa sponsored by the Extension Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture -- it's a new way of getting Extension help out to the people. Extension home economist Mabel Flint -- a mass media specialist who usually presents the information on homemaking to the people through television and radio programs -- has developed this novel way of reaching out to the consumer. It's going direct to the people.

The program, "do it yourself" opportunity, goes to the home site on wheels. An old housing van -- operated by a paraprofessional -- travels from community to community to teach low-income homemakers how to take care of their household problems. Basic repair work and some maintenance is covered by the community workshops given by the house-van-operator. Demonstrations cover "house problems" on everything from weatherstripping your home to how to close up cracks in the foundation of the house. How to repair electric cords and how to fix your dripping faucet is part of the "Ship Shape" plan. It's really how to operate and maintain your own little corner of the world -- by doing it yourself.

WOODSY OWL'S "Hoot of the Week" -- From the Forest Service, USDA

Spring is here -- but -- Don't let the sunshine in...and you'll save on home and office air conditioning bills. Blinds and drapes can reduce the sun's heat by as much as 50%. Light opaque shades work better than dark ones. Awnings and overhangs are the most effective way to reduce solar heat gain. (If you have a "Hoot" idea, send it with documentation to Woodsy Owl, USDA Forest Service, Room 3224, South Agriculture Building, Washington, D.C. 20250.)

NOTE: Additional information for the MEDIA and photographs (when applicable) may be obtained from: Shirley Wagener, Editor of Food and Home Notes, Room 535-A, Office of Communication/Press Division, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250. Or telephone 202-447-5898.
